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A LITTLE GIRL OF OLD CALIFORNIA

BY SARAH BIXBY SMITH

A long time ago when the first railroad into California had found its winding way over the high mountains and down to the sea there were not many people outside San Francisco, and the country was wide and empty. Father and two of his cousins had come with the Argonauts, but had chosen to raise sheep rather than to follow the uncertainties of mining, and that meant the control of much land for grazing. On one of these large sheep ranches, the San Justo, near the little old town of San Juan Bautista, I was born.

Home was in the foothills whose velvety slopes, sometimes brown, sometimes green, were dotted with live oaks; and over all was the wide blue sky, a little patch of it seeming to have fallen into the pond in the near-by hollow. This was a wonderful pond, for it attracted water which appeared to run up hill through a roadside ditch, and it contained fish which never consented to be caught on the bent pin with which I fished for many an hour.

The large house, built about 1860 to accommodate the three cousins and their families, was white, with green blinds, Maine memories bodied forth in a far land. It contained conveniences of modern plumbing that I fear the eastern prototypes had to await for still many a year. Under the long front veranda there could be found sweet potatoes very good for nibbling, and sacks of beet seed, reminders of an early interest in the manufacture of beet sugar. Beside the house there were horse barn and fine sheep barn, men's house and shed, all as white as the house itself.

There was an old-fashioned flower garden with Johnnie-jumps-ups, honeysuckle, mourning-bride, and an orange tree that gave blossoms but no oranges, important enough for me to remember; there was a vegetable garden where little onions and horseradish grew, and an orchard whose chief glory was several cherry trees. On top of a near-by hill was the family burying ground where a few lay under the wildflowers, some babies, and Uncle Solomon, father's young brother, who, while reading poetry in a lonely sheep-camp, had been shot to death by some unknown hand.

No other houses were in sight, but not many miles away, down a winding road, and over the bridge, lay the town with its postoffice, store, a few houses and friends, and its old mission, which had a long corridor, arched and tile-paved, and an enclosed garden where peacocks used to walk and drop long, shining feathers for little girls to pick up. Inside was dim silence, with strange dark pictures on

the walls, some old music books with large notes, and a precious Bible, chained to its desk. There was another church in the place, one that was light and bare and small, where I learned from a tiny flowered Sunday school card, "Blessed are the peacemakers," which, being interpreted for my benefit, meant, "Sally must not quarrel with little sister." And I ate up a rosebud and wriggled in my seat during the long sermon, and wondered about the lady who brushed her hair smooth and low on one side and high on the other: had she only one ear? And that is all I remember of the little church where I went almost every Sunday.

My earliest memory is of sitting in my mother's lap in a stage full of men, and of being unbearably hot. But once when I asked my father if I had ever been taken on such a trip he maintained that I could not remember that terrible trip up through the San Joaquin Valley during the hottest weather he ever knew there, for I was not quite a year old. But I know I do remember.

There were many long rides with father in those very little girl days, when he was going the rounds of the sheep camps or over to Salinas or Gilroy. For a time I would sit up very straight, but soon would retire to the bottom of the buggy for a nap, with father's foot for a pillow, and I remember when I grew so long that I could no longer lie straight, but must put my feet back under the seat.

There was one time when father and I cleared land for many days together, burning oak stumps and grubbing out brush, and on the hillside above this I walked with mother, and she made me chaplets of oak leaves, fastening each leaf to the next in a most ingenious way.

There is a memory also of a trip to a circus at Hollister, where I saw Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb, Minnie Warren and Commodore Nutt, whose pictures, with Mr. Barnum, I still have. Minnie Warren was supposed to be the height of a six-year-old girl, and children of that age in the audience were invited to measure with her. But it must have been eastern six-year-olds that she was supposed to match, for I was quite a little taller. My first heroine was a lady of this same circus who rode bareback in tarleton skirts and jumped through tissue-papered hoops, but, alas! I have lost her name!

All day there was play, except for an occasional stint of patch work, every day but Sunday, and then there was stories, oh, such stories! Mother would say, "When I was a little girl away down in Maine" until Maine seemed Paradise. We had no brooks nor river, no snow nor sleds; we had no Susan and Ella. Why were there only boys for me to play with, and why did not something interesting happen to me? It was nothing to me that there was the big ranch with horses and cows, pigs, dogs, and sheep, hens and

ducks, turkeys and geese—they were commonplace; it was nothing to me that Dick and I could make figure-four traps and catch live quail, or that once we found our trap disturbed and bear tracks all about! It was not exciting to hunt tarantulas and to pry open the door that the mother spider was holding closed with all her strength, nor to see the baby tarantulas running in every direction when the nest was finally raided. No, life in California was very tame, compared to that in Maine—only the same things to do that I had done all my long life!

Once mother took me "way down to Maine" to see grandfather and grandmother. There I learned many strange things. Leaves were not green, but red and purple and yellow and brown, and they were so loose on the trees that of a sudden they all fell off; but they were very nice for scuffing in, and when the wind blew them after one they looked like all the rats following the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Mother gathered some of the prettiest leaves and pressed them, and polished them with wax and a hot iron, and we took them back to California and pinned them on our lace curtains.

Soon after we reached Maine the air filled with goose feathers, only it wasn't feathers, but wet snow! And then came sleds and sleigh rides, and Christmas with a piggy-back ride on grandfather to the tree at the church.

In those days I learned smells as well as sights, and now know for always the smell of snow in the air, the weeds in winter, the woodshed and the winter-bound barn, and of the old, old house so long lived in.

But we were not going to stay always in Maine, so father came all the way from San Juan to get us. He took us to Boston, where Miss Three-Year-Old was dressed up in her bottle green dress and bottle green coat, with stockings and velvet bonnet to match, and white kid gloves, and taken to call upon the cousins in Beacon Street, opposite the Gardens. At the side of the entrance steps was a low coping, just right for a handrail for the little girl, and she eternally disgraced herself, proving that she was no child of prim Boston, by dragging her little Western hand in its white kid glove up that rail. Poor black white gloves! I am afraid she took more naturally to comfort and mud-pies than to elegance and formal calls.

Soon we reached Chicago, where Uncle Jo lived, and the big cinnamon bear in Union Park. That night there was a fire in the business section, and it was not so long after Chicago's great fire that people had forgotten the horror. There was fear and panic, and we must leave the hotel and fly to safety. We made our way slowly in the night, when children should be asleep, through streets packed with frightened, pushing, shouting people, to a house beyond

the reach of danger. And from the seat in Uncle Jo's buggy we could look back over the heads of the people to the red fire dancing at the end of the street. The house where we went, so far as I remember, had nothing in it but mosquitoes and a red balloon, and a talking doll that the dear uncle bought.

In those days it took a week to reach San Francisco from Chicago. What fun it was to have the table for lunch, and the basket opened and the good things laid out—fried chicken and a long, green bottle of olives, and a can of patent lemonade—a tiny bottle of extract in a can of the queerest, greenish sugar, and wanting only train water to make it into ambrosia. Then hands were washed in water made soft and white by Florida Water, something that never happened at home. There were Indians to be seen at the stations, with little Hiawathas on their backs, and cunning beaded moccasins to sell; and once at night, with my nose pressed against the window, I saw by the light of a flaring torch a big buffalo head upon a pole.

San Francisco came next, with a ride on the octagonal street street car, and a visit to Woodward's Gardens, and then home by train and stage. It was good, after all, to get back to California. Here was our own sitting room, with its marble mantel, its pretty flowered carpet, its pictures of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, hanging by their crimson cords with tassels; and here were old toys and the boy cousins that lived at the other end of the house. And here soon came little sister, who was the cunningest baby that ever was, but what a long time it did take for her to grow up enough to play with anyone who was born so much as three years ahead of her!

We lived at San Justo forever, and then when I was seven, we moved to Los Angeles. And if I wanted I could tell many things of the little town of less than ten thousand people, a town with orange orchards and zanjas, of vineyards and cottage homes where now are paved streets and skyscrapers; of the dentist who traveled in a golden chariot, and did a Painless Parker business in the open at the Plaza; of the tight-rope walker who flipped flapjacks on the rope across Main Street at the Baker Block; of the visit of President Hayes and his party, and the reception given him in the fashionable St. Elmo Hotel, alas! no longer fashionable, tho' still standing. But why talk of Los Angeles? It was the place of business, going to school or buying shoes at the Queen or cloth for a doll's dress at Coulter's or Christmas presents at the Crystal Palace, or some other commonplace living. The fun of life was at the sheep ranches, the Alamitos or the Cerritos, at each of which lived an uncle and aunt and some double cousins, and at which I made long and frequent visits.

It was at the Cerritos that I had my particular cronie, Harry, and it was there that the most interesting things happened to me. The old house now lies on the brow of the hill like a tired dog that has thrown itself down to rest with its paws stretched out before it. Little do the gay people that motor past it on their way to the beach dream of the past glory of the old adobe, of its charm, its comfort, its active life. It was one of the largest and finest of old homes, a two-storyed adobe, and it is a pity that it has been deserted.

The main portion of the house, with its lower windows protected by iron bars, was one hundred feet long. On the north were two wings even longer, and the court was closed by an adobe wall with large wooden gates. On the south side of the house there was a long porch extending the full length, which was floored with brick that had come "around the Horn," while above it was the wide covered balcony on whose floor might possibly still be found little round patches of brea which we children dug with sticks from the roof and wings when the covering was softened in the summer sun. In front of these verandas there was a garden laid out in many beds with more of the travelled bricks, and a well-built hexagonal summer house covered with Madeira vine in the center, the whole being surrounded by a ten-foot fence to keep out the winds that swept in from the neighboring ocean.

The house was built about 1840 by Don Juan Temple (probably plain John Temple when he was baptised in far-away Massachusetts), and it must have known all the hospitalities and festivities common to the life of those early haciendas. In 1866 Don Temple, growing old and wishing to close up his business affairs, sold to my people for twenty thousand dollars in gold the rancho of twenty-seven thousand acres and the house upon which he had lavished so much care and money. The bulk of this ranch was sold many years ago, and the towns of Clearwater and Hines and the city of Long Beach west of Alamitos Avenue, are upon it, the eastern part being upon the Alamitos Ranch. A short time after Don Temple made this sale he died and his wife and daughter, who was the wife of a French gentleman, went to Paris to live. People familiar with Los Angeles will remember the street starting from the old center of town which bears the name of Temple in honor of this old don.

When my uncle and his beautiful young wife first began to live at the ranch they found some primitive conditions. The cooking in the kitchen was done before an open fireplace, supplemented by a brick oven in the yard. Clustering about the house were many little huts or jakals made of tule or willow brush, in which lived many old retainers of mixed Spanish and Indian blood, but as the business of the ranch was changed they gradually drifted away.

There were few neighbors, except the Dominguez family, and Los Angeles, the sleepy little town, was too far away to offer much social life, but there were occasional visitors from San Francisco or far east, and trips to these places were taken. My aunt was a passenger, I have been told, on the first through train from San Francisco to the East.

Once Admiral Thatcher, an old friend of the family, and at that time in command of the Pacific fleet, came in his flagship, "Pensacola," to San Pedro, and he and his officers were guests at the ranch for several days. I have seen a letter of his written soon after this in which he makes recommendations for the construction of a suitable harbor at San Pedro, which are interesting in the light of the developments of half a century later.

It is around this old house that happy memories of my later childhood gather. We children ranged about freely from morning to night during our vacation days. On rare rainy days I read, lying crosswise on one of the stuffed chairs covered with dark red leather, or curled up in one of the deep windowsills—the walls of the lower floor were four feet thick, so that the windows, perhaps, functioned better as cubby holes than as sources of light.

But it was out of doors that we usually played. We could go down to the orchard, where all summer long there were ripe apples and pears, or we could shed our usual shoes and wade in the San Gabriel, reduced to its safe summer level. I remember once sitting down, clothes and all, in a deeper pool, and grinning over the surface at Harry, similarly seated. We could watch the hundreds of pigeons flying in and out of the deserted old adobe, known to us, because of its condition, as "The Flea House," or we could go to our retreat in an enlarged coyote hole in the pasture on the other side of the hill. We could play in the old stage that stood in the weeds just outside the high garden fence, a stage that remained from the earlier day before the railroads when father and his cousin partners ran the stage lines, carrying mails, express and passengers between San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

In the right wing of the house was a store room of unfailing interest, but locked and barred. Here were barrels of brown sugar, so good by the handful, and sweet chocolate that tempted to petty larceny; big boxes of Chinese tea with gay pictures on the outside and a heavy leadfoil that carried the smell of tea for many days in our pockets.

One day I discovered heavy white smoke pouring out the iron-barred window, and my hurried search for father brought him and several men to fight a most difficult fire caused by the drying out and self-ignition of some sticks of phosphorus kept for preparing poisoned wheat for the army of squirrels that wanted our grain.

Next to this room was the dark blacksmith shop, with the wide, black chimney, the old forge and bellows, the anvils where we pounded lead pipe into the semblance of little books, and ornamented them with designs of nail pricks; and high up in the wall the mysterious funnel-shaped holes that were meant for guns in the early days when defense might be needed. The next room was a carriage room, beyond that a dark room whose entire floor I have seen covered with apples, and the last room was a man's room where lived one of our good friends, who later deserted the ranch to open a saloon on Commercial Street in Los Angeles.

Across the court in the other wing of the house was the kitchen where Ying reigned supreme, and Fan was his prime minister. Next came the men's dining room, with oilcloth-covered table, and always the smell of mutton stew and onions, good to the hungry noses; then the woodroom, a very necessary adjunct to a kitchen where cooking for as many as thirty people had to be done with willow wood for fuel. Then came the wash room, where every week we could watch the inimitable skill of the Chinese method of sprinkling clothes with a spray blown from the mouth—those were the days before the propaganda against germs. The last room on that side was the dairy room, with its rows of pans of milk and its fascinating barrel churn. From that room used to come unlimited supplies of milk, butter, and cream that could be spread with a knife, a variety of cream that seems to have vanished from the earth.

Back of this wing was a second court with barns, granary (where we sometimes raced over the deep, loose grain catching mice in our hands), pig-pens, chicken house, and private accommodations for Silverheel, father of all the colts, the wise stallion who, when once caught in a burning stable, dashed out and smothered the fire in his burning mane by rolling in the dust, an example that was remembered and followed successfully later by my little cousin Fanny when her dress caught fire. In this rear court stood also the brick oven where, every Saturday, Ying baked pies and rolls and bread, and, at Christmas time, the whole little pig.

But the sheltered, spacious garden, lying in the sunshine, was the best of all. Old cedars, whose cones we were told by an older boy, were bats' eggs; locust, orange and lemon blossoms, lilac and lemon-verbena, roses and oleander, heliotrope and honey-suckle, and the odor of honey stored for years by the bees, made a heaven of fragrance. The linnets, friendly and twittering, built about the porch and the swallows nested under the eaves; the ruby-throated and iridescent humming birds darted from flower to flower and built their tiny felt-like nests in the trees, and great, lazy, yellow butterflies floated by. There were oranges and lemons, olives, pome-

granates and figs; and grapes, green, blueblack and rose-colored, hanging under the low canopies of leaves and inviting us to lie in the pale green light and feast without stint. Over by the windmill was a boggy bed of mint, and many a brewing of afternoon tea it furnished us—mint tea in the summer-house, with Ying's cookies, scalloped and sparkling with sugar crystals.

Cookies were not the only things in which Ying excelled. There were cakes fearfully and wonderfully decorated with frosting curly-cues and custard pie so good that grandfather always included it with the doughnuts and cheese that little David carried in his lunch-basket when he went up to visit his brothers on the famous occasion when he slew Goliath with his sling-shot.

Grandfather had left his old Maine home and now sat on the wide brick veranda and charmed his child audience with versions of the Hebrew stories that I judge he did not use in the pulpit of the dignified village church where he had ministered for so many years. We learned how Samson's strength returned to him, when, in the temple of the Philistines, the hooting mob threw rotten eggs at him (grandfather knew how mobs act, for he had met them in the days when he was an early speaker for the Abolitionist), and we learned more about David, how, when the lion attacked his sheep, he ran so fast to the rescue that his little coat-tails stuck out straight behind him; how, when the lion opened his mouth to roar, David reached down his throat and caught him by the roots of his tongue and held him, while with his other hand he pulled his jack-knife out of his trouser's pocket, opened it with his teeth, and promptly killed the beast; how he then sat down upon a great white stone, played on his jewsharp and sang "Twinkle, twinkle, little star."

Grandfather not only told us stories, but to me he opened Sunday for secular reading, telling me one day when the question of my reading Grimm's Fairy Tales on Sunday had been raised, and I had been sent to him as the highest authority—I see him looking over the tops of his spectacles at the wishful child—that a book that was fit to read any day was fit to read on Sunday. I bless the memory of grandfather.

I treasure a little lacquer box that he bought for me once from a Chinese peddler who had walked the dusty miles from Los Angeles, balancing on a pole over his shoulder the two large, round bamboo baskets, so familiar in those earlier California days. We all gathered while on the floor of the shady porch were spread the wonders of China; nests of lacquer boxes, with graceful sprays or curious designs in dull gold; bread boats, black outside and Chinese vermillion inside; Canton china, with its fascinating ladies and flowers and butterflies in pink and green; tea-pots in basket cosies, covered cups, chop-sticks and ivory back-scratchers; carved

ivories; crepe or embroidered handkerchiefs, cerise, white, apple green; gorgeous hanging baskets of flowers fashioned from bright colored silk, feathers and tinsel; sandal-wood boxes and fans, puzzles, tiny tortoise-shell turtles with quivering legs and head, safely fastened in little glass-covered green boxes, and lichee nuts and cocoanut candy. How could so many things come out of those two baskets?

If the Chinaman was an essential part of the housekeeping, the Mexican was no less important in the ranch work. There were many of them, several José's, Miguel (who, by the way, is spending his last days with various of his descendants in the old house), Allesandro, and others, but the one who stands out was Juan Cañedo, a dignified figure who had come with the ranch, insisting that he belonged with the land and had been sold with it by Don Temple. He was the best vaquero in the country, being equally skillful with either hand in the use of the lariat. When not otherwise occupied I remember him setting out on horseback, surrounded with the hounds, Duke, Queen, Timeroso, and a dozen others, to hunt coyotes, the constant menace to the sheep. Old Juan never condescended to speak English, although he understood it, and as I did not speak Spanish I never talked with him. The boys learned Spanish, and so were able to enjoy the tales he told. They also, being boys, had the privilege of riding with him to the rodeos at the Palos Verdes, but I, being only a girl, must stay at home and be a lady, whether I was one or not.

Sheep, however, were the main interest. We ate sheep, smelled sheep, saw sheep, heard sheep, talked sheep; we lived, moved and had our being in, for and by sheep. There were sometimes as many as thirty thousand on this ranch alone. We had got into the business in the early days of our being in California, long before I was dreamed of.

My father, Llewellyn Bixby, and two cousins, Benjamin and Thomas Flint, all young men in their twenties, came from Maine by way of the Isthmus of Panama to California, reaching San Francisco on the S. S. Northerner on July 7, 1851. They landed in a small boat at Clay and Montgomery streets, and left the same evening for Sacramento. From there they went by freight wagon to Volcano, Amador County. Sooner or later my father's seven brothers and two sisters found their way to this land of promise, and now all lie sleeping under its sunny sky.

A week of mining satisfied the three cousins and they looked for other work, my father finding a job with a butcher who paid him \$150.00 a month, with board, no small item in those days when the cost of living was higher even than now. After a year and a half the young men had accumulated five thousand dollars, which they

decided to combine, and therewith make a business venture as partners. So on Christmas Day, 1852, they left Volcano, sailing from San Francisco on the same S. S. Northerner on the following New Year's Day. I have been told that one of them sat on the precious box of gold dust all the way.

While the gold was being minted at Philadelphia they visited the home in Maine, then took the train for the west, going to Indianapolis, the western limit of rail travel at that time. There they formed the partnership of Flint, Bixby & Co., a well-known firm of early California. From here they started on horseback. At Quincy, Illinois, they purchased their outfit for the trip across the plains and bought 2400 sheep. They crossed the Mississippi on June first, went on to Council Bluffs, thence by the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City. Here they bought 110 head of cattle, and, it being too late to cross the Sierras, took the Fremont Trail into Southern California, arriving at San Bernardino on January first, 1854, just a year to a day from their sailing from San Francisco. They arrived at San Gabriel a week later and went into camp on the present site of Pasadena, where they stayed until March, when they started up the coast. They camped at Santa Teresa Ranch, near San Jose, for a year, then moved to Monterey County, and in October purchased the San Justo Ranch from Francisco Perez Pacheco, one-half of which was later sold to Colonel William Hollister.

How I wish I knew more of the details of the venturesome trip, but I remember only a few of the incidents that my father told me as a child. I recall his boast that he had walked across the plains, explaining that the sheep moved so slowly that it was pleasanter to walk than to use his horse. Just before reaching Salt Lake City their caravan came upon a stranded party of Mormons, whom they rescued and took in safety to their goal, the oasis of the City of the Saints. Brigham Young was so pleased at their kindness to his followers that he entertained the young Yankees, their cattle and sheep for two weeks, in order that they might be in good condition to meet the hardships of the coming trip across the desert. Our party escaped any general attack of Indians, but one young man who was standing guard for father one night was shot and killed. On one occasion some Indians brought in venison, which was bought and greatly enjoyed until it was discovered that the number of supposed deer corresponded exactly to the number of their colts that had disappeared mysteriously. They lost other of the stock, especially during the last stretch of desert, where there were one hundred miles without water, but on the whole whole the venture was a great success, and we were launched in the sheep business, almost the first of any Americans to be so in California.

It had grown to large proportions long before I knew it, with many bands of sheep on many ranches in different parts of the state. At one time these men imported some valuable Merino sheep, materially improving the quality of California wool. I remember a wonderful ram with wool that hung to the ground, and great curling horns, an honored gentleman who lived in state in the "Fine Stock Barn" with a few favored wives. It was impressed upon the little girl that it was not wise to get familiar with him, for he was neither polite nor gentle.

Most of the sheep, however, lived out on the ranges in bands of about two thousand under the care of a sheepherder and several dogs. These men lived lonely lives, usually seeing no one between the weekly visits of the man with supplies from the ranch. Often there was some mystery about the men who took this work—a life with the sheep was far away from curious observation, and served very well for a living grave. Once I overheard talk of a herder who had been found dead in his little cabin. He had hanged himself. And no one knew what tragedy in his life lay behind the fatal despondency!

Once every week a man from the ranch made the rounds of the sheep camps, carrying mail and tobacco and food, brown sugar, coffee, flour, bacon, beans, potatoes, dried apples. On the mornings when this was to happen I have watched the flickering light of the lantern travel back and forth over the ceiling of the room where I was supposed to be asleep, as the finishing touches were put on the wagon-load, and the horses were brought and hitched to the wagon before daylight, so that the long rounds could be made before night.

Twice a year, spring and fall, the sheep came up to be sheared, dipped and counted. Father usually attended to the count himself, as he could keep tally without confusion. He would stand by a narrow passage between two corrals, and as the sheep went crowding through he would count and keep tally by cutting notches on a willow stick.

During shearing time we heard new noises out in the dark at night, after we were tucked in our beds, the candle blown out and the door to the upper porch opened. Always there were crickets and owls and howling coyotes, and overhead the scurrying footsteps of some mouse on its mysterious errands, or the soft dab of an errant bat on the window, but now were added the unceasing bleatings of thousands of sheep in a strange place, and separated, ewe from lamb, lamb from ewe.

Shearing began on Monday morning, and the day before the shearers would come in a gay band of Mexicans on their prancing horses, decked with wonderful bridles made of rawhide or braided

horsehair, and trimmed with silver, and saddles with high horns, sweeping stirrups and wide expanse of beautiful tooled leather. The men themselves were dressed in black broadcloth, with ruffled shirts and high-heeled boots and high-crowned, wide sombreros, trimmed with silver-braided hatbands, and held securely in place by a cord under the nose. The men would come in, fifty or sixty at a time, and stake out their caballos, put away their finery, and appear in brown overalls, red bandanas upon their heads, and live and work at the ranch for a month, so many were the sheep to be sheared.

Once at the Alamitos a number of men had chosen places in the hay in the barn to sleep, each man holding his chosen place most jealousy from invasion. Half a dozen of us children, starting out after breakfast on the day's adventure, after taking each a slice from the raw ham stolen from the smoke-house and secreted in the hay, spied some clothes carefully hung on the wall above the hay-mow, and the idea of stuffing the clothes into the semblance of a man was no sooner born than it was adopted. Our whole joy was in doing a life-like piece of work and perhaps of fooling somebody. Little we knew how seriously a hot-tempered Mexican might object to being fooled. In the evening when the men came to go to bed the owner of the particular hole in which our dummy was sleeping was furious at finding his place occupied. He ordered the stranger out. No move. He swore violently. Still no move. He kicked. And as he saw the man come apart and spill out hay instead of blood, his rage knew no bounds, his knife came out, and it was only by good luck that we children were not the cause of a murder that night.

There were similar wool barns at all three of the ranches that I knew, but I officiated at shearing more often at the Cerritos. Here the barn was out beyond the garden, facing away from the house, and towards a series of corrals of varying sixes. The front of the barn was like a wide veranda, with big cracks in the floor. Before this were two small enclosures into which a hundred sheep might be turned. The shearer would go out among these sheep, feel critically the wool on the back, choose his victim and drag it backward, holding it by one leg, while it hopped on the remaining three, to his regular position on the shearing floor. Throwing the sheep down, he would hold it with his knees, tip its head up, and begin to clip, clip, clip, until soon its fleece would be lying on the floor, the sheep would be dismissed with a slap and the wool gathered up and placed on the counter that ran the length of the barn back of the shearing floor. Here the big boys of the family tied each fleece into a ball and tossed it into the long sack suspended in a frame a few feet back, another responsible boy or man tramping the fleeces down tight into the long bag. When the shearer brought his

fleece to the counter he was given a little copper check, about the size of a nickel, and marked J. B., which he was to present Saturday afternoon when father and uncle exchanged checks for money. It was a fact that frequently the most rapid shearers did not get the most pay on pay-day, simply because they were less skillful as gamblers than as shearers. I remember going one night out into the garden and peeking through a knot-hole to watch the dark skinned men squatting around a single candle intensely interested in a game of cards. The pile of copper checks was very evident, and the cards were curious, foreign-looking, quite different from the ones in the house.

I had several parts in these busy days. Sometimes I was allowed to walk back and forth on the counter and give out the checks to the men when they brought a fleece, and much time I spent up on this same counter braiding the long, hanging bunches of twine that was used for tying up the fleeces in balls. I worked until I became expert in branding any number of strands, either flat or round. A few times I was let climb up the frame and down into the suffocatingly hot depths of the hanging sacks, to help tramp the wool, but that was not a coveted privilege, it was too hot. I loved to hold the brass stencils while the name of firm and number of sack was painted on the prone roll before it was put aside to wait for the next load going to Wilmington. Never was there a better place for running and tumbling than the row of long, tight wool sacks in the dark corner of the barn.

And many a check was slipped into our hands, that would promptly change into a watermelon, fat and green or long and striped, for during the September shearing there was always just outside the barn a big "Studebaker," not an auto in those days, full of melons sold always, no matter what the size, for a nickel apiece. It has ruined me permanently as a shopper for watermelons; nothing makes me feel more abused by the H. C. L. than to try to separate a grocer and his melon.

I seem to have gotten far away from my subject, but, really, I am only standing in the brown mallows outside the open end of the wool barn, watching the six-horse team start for Wilmington with its load of precious wool that is to be shipped by steamer to "The City," San Francisco, the one and only of those days.

As soon as the shearing was well under way the dipping began. This was managed by the members of the family and the regular men on the ranch. In the corral east of the barn was the brick fireplace with the big tank on top where the "dip" was brewed, scalding tobacco soup, seasoned with sulphur, and I do not know what else. This mess was served hot in a long, narrow, sunken tub, with a vertical end near the cauldron, and a sloping, cleated

floor at the other. Into this steaming bath each sheep was thrown, it must swim fifteen or twenty feet to safety, and during the passage its head must be pushed beneath the surface. How glad it must have been when its feet struck bottom at the far end, and it could scramble out to safety. How it shook itself, and what a taste it must have had in its mouth. I am afraid Madam Sheep cherished hard feelings against her universe. She did not know that her over-ruling providence was saving her from the miseries of a bad skin disease.

Now the sheep are all gone, and the shearers and dippers are gone, too. The pastoral life gave way to the agricultural, and that in turn to the town and city. There is Long Beach. Once it was cattle range, then sheep pasture, then, when I first knew it, a barley field with one shed standing about where Pine and First streets cross. And the beach was our own private, wonderful beach; and we children felt that our world was reeling when the beach was sold and called Wilmore City. Nobody now knows what a wide, smooth, long beach it was. It was covered with shells and piles of kelp and a broad band of tiny clams; there were gulls and many little shore birds, and never a footprint except the few we made, only to be washed away by the next tide. Two or three times a summer we would go over from the ranch for a day, and beautiful days we had, racing on the sand or going into the breakers with father or uncle, who are now thought of only as old men, venerable fathers of the city. Ying would put us up a most generous lunch, but the thing that was most characteristic and which is remembered best is the meat cooked over the little driftwood fire. Father always was cook of the mutton chops that were strung on a sharpened willow stick, and I shall never forget the most delicious meat ever given me, smoky chops, gritty with he sand blown over them by the constant sea breeze. I wonder if the chef of the fashionable Hotel Virginia, which occupies the site of our out-door kitchen, ever serves the guests so good a meal as we had on the sand of the beautiful, empty beach.

All these things happened once upon a time in the long ago, and now we children are all grown up, and grandfather, father and mother and uncles and boon-companion Harry live only in the changeless land of memory.